

Appl. No. : **09/807,580**
Filed : **April 13, 2001**

REMARKS

In the final Office Action mailed November 21, 2005, the Examiner found Claims 16 and 18 to be allowable. The Examiner also rejected Claims 8-9, 11-15 and 17. In the present Amendment and Response, Applicants have cancelled Claims 8, 11, 13 and 17 and have amended Claims 9, 12, 14, 16 and 18.

Allowable Subject Matter and Amendments to the Claims

Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for indicating that Claims 16 and 18 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response, Applicants have rewritten Claims 16 and 18 in independent form. Claim 16 now recites all limitations of cancelled base Claim 8 and cancelled intervening Claim 11. In addition, Claim 18 now recites all the limitations of cancelled base Claim 15 and cancelled intervening Claim 17. In view of these amendments, dependent Claims 9 and 12 have been amended to depend from new independent Claim 16, and dependent Claim 14 has been amended to depend from new independent Claim 18. All dependent claims now depend from allowable independent claims. Consequently, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending Claims 9, 12, 14, 16 and 18 are in condition for allowance.

Because Applicants have merely incorporated limitations of independent claims and, in some cases, intervening dependent claims, into certain of the dependent claims and have merely changed the dependencies of other claims, Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments add no new matter and are fully supported by the Application as originally filed.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner has rejected Claims 8-9, 11-15 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Muka (U.S. Patent No. 6,079,927) in view of various secondary references. While Applicants do not acquiesce in the rejections and respectfully submit that the art of record does not render the rejected claims unpatentable, Applicants have nevertheless cancelled rejected Claims 8, 11, 13 and 17 and amended rejected Claims 9, 12 and 14 to expedite prosecution of the present Application. Consequently, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections are moot and that the pending claims are allowable over the art of record.

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CONCLUSIONS

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants request entry of the amendments and submit that the application is in condition for allowance and respectfully request the same. If some issue remains which the Examiner feels may be addressed by Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is cordially invited to call the undersigned for authorization.

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

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